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Editorial

LATIN FOR ALL

[We read with pleasure the following editorial review of a pamphlet by J. W. Mackail in a recent number of the *London Times*; and, because of the strong note of encouragement which it contains, we wish to pass it on to the readers of the *Journal*. — EDITOR.]

In these days of party turmoil it falls to the lot of few to write a pamphlet pleasing to all parties. But such, it may be believed, if all parties are honest, will have been the feat performed by MR. J. W. MACKAIL, of the board of Education, whose pamphlet, "The Case for Latin in Secondary Schools," has just been published by MR. MURRAY at sixpence. It is the case for making Latin, not necessarily advanced Latin, still less Latin with Greek, an integral and essential element, with English, French, and science, in the organic whole of the secondary school course; and the reasons for it, as marshalled by MR. MACKAIL, appear overwhelming. No true Conservative can object to it, for it conserves a tradition dear to him; no Liberal ought to find fault with it, for it aims at liberating; and as for Labour, MR. MACKAIL is able to quote the views of the accredited representatives of that party, which are emphatically in its favour. The chief point is that in Latin the modern world, and the English world in particular, admittedly possesses an educational instrument of the first quality. Why, then, since to use it costs no more than to use other instruments, should it not be used to the utmost? The stock objections, mainly due to a want of clear thinking, vanish under MR. MACKAIL's presentation of his case. If, as is sometimes said, Latin is the hall-mark of a social class, so were once "baths and windows;" why, then, should people be suspicious of sharing a thing that is good for the enrichment of life? If only a smattering of Latin is the result for the majority, in what subject is "full fruition" acquired at the age of sixteen? MR. MACKAIL believes that Latin would "tune up" and "reinforce" the whole work

of the school. Even quite a little may stick. But apart from the actual amount learnt in a course which may vary in length, MR. MACKAIL reminds us that out of the one hundred thousand current words in the English vocabulary, sixty thousand are of Latin origin, against thirty thousand purely English and ten thousand from other foreign sources. For the understanding of their own language, Latin, or an acquaintance with it at least, is indispensable to English speakers. A knowledge of it, greater or less, has been the most constant element in the national education from time immemorial. The nation is now beginning to be conscious of the excellence of its own language and literature as a means of widening the mind, training the imagination, and breeding not machines, but citizens, and it ought not to ignore the exceedingly strong element of Latin in both. It is there irrevocably, and it must be understood. Latin therefore becomes, in the narrower sense, a highly "practical" subject, because no one who does not know what words mean can be expected to use them correctly or easily. It is not a question of turning out battalions of accomplished Latin scholars, though the wider the commonalty in which a good thing is spread the better, but of getting the principle recognized that Latin is a good thing, and for the young Englishmen, who are confronted with it in every line of print, a thing into which as many of them as possible should at least be initiated.

A NOTABLE OBJECTIVE

Never before have the minds of classical teachers been so awakened to the fact that all their teaching must have an *aim*, must be directed toward some particular end or objective in order to be efficient. They have been awakened to this necessity of aims by the very fact that the desirable aims have been listed and their comparative values submitted to testing and discussion. In the *Classical Journal* for October, 1921, a list of twenty-six teaching objectives is proposed as a field for the investigations of the Classical Survey, and these have been kept before our whole classical teaching body with varying emphasis during the past two years.

Some of these objectives have been stressed more than others, and some of our teachers have been a bit nervous lest they be overstressed. The value of Latin to the study, for instance, of Eng-